

ABLE ACT

The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act of 2014 enables individuals with disabilities to save money in tax-advantaged accounts which they can later use for meeting their disability-related needs with limited impact on their eligibility for certain means-tested benefits. They are similar to CHET or 529 accounts except that beneficiaries of ABLE accounts own the account. Eligibility for an ABLE account is open to an individual of any age who has blindness or a disability that occurred before the age of 26. An individual is allowed only one ABLE account and can open an account in any state's ABLE program. The determination of eligibility for an ABLE account is the responsibility of the ABLE program in which an individual seeks to establish the account.

Link to ABLE Account process in CT: <https://savewithable.com/ct/home.html>

How does an ABLE Account effect eligibility for DSS Programs?

SNAP*:

SNAP benefits do not have an asset limit unless the household is elderly (age 60+) or disabled and has income over 185% of FPL. In that case, the asset limit is \$3,500. That being said, ABLE Accounts are an excluded asset in the SNAP program.

State CASH programs – State Supplement (SSUP) or State Administered General Assistance (SAGA)*:

There is no statute or regulation providing for the disregard of funds in an ABLE account for state-funded programs like SSUP and SAGA, and the funds in an ABLE would be countable for these programs in CT.

Medicaid*:

- Unlike pooled or special needs trusts, income received by the beneficiary such as wages, SSI, or child support contributed to or directly deposited into an ABLE account by the beneficiary is counted as available income in determining their Medicaid eligibility.
- Funds, including funds transferred from a countable asset and interest earned, held in the ABLE account are excluded when determining eligibility for Medicaid.
- Upon death of the designated beneficiary, any funds remaining in the ABLE account, after payment of all outstanding disability expenses, will be reimbursed to the State for Medicaid benefits paid.

All determinations for benefit program eligibility is subject to Department of Social Services review and interpretation.

DDS strongly encourages families to work with an Able account organization to ensure the account was set up properly.